

Details:

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2009-10

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Criminal Justice (AC-CJ)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... CR
- Executive Sessions ... ES
- Public Hearings ... PH

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... Appt (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)

(ab = Assembly Bill)

(ar = Assembly Resolution)

(ajr = Assembly Joint Resolution)

(**sb** = Senate Bill)

(**sr** = Senate Resolution)

(**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)

Miscellaneous ... Misc

Assembly

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Criminal Justice

Assembly Bill 340

Relating to: restricting access to and limiting information contained in the Consolidated Court Automation Programs and providing a penalty.

By Representatives Schneider, Kessler and A. Williams.

July 08, 2009

Referred to Committee on Criminal Justice.

October 1, 2009

PUBLIC HEARING HELD

Present:

(10) Representatives Turner, Kessler, Staskunas,

Hraychuck, Soletski, Pasch, Kleefisch, Friske,

Kramer, Brooks.

Absent:

(1) Representative Ripp.

Appearances For

- Marlin Schneider, Madison State Representative
- Bob Andersen, Madison Legal Action of Wisconsin
- Safraunya Pulley, Milwaukee
- Sandra Woods, Milwaukee
- Sharon McCoy-Hunt, Milwaukee
- Keith Findley, Madison WI Innocence Project
- Rex Oehlhof, Westfield
- Fredric Saecker, Sparta
- Mary Delaney, Monona Exonerees
- Guy Taylor Self
- Cynthia Kieper, Madison Attorney, Office of Rep. Marlin Schneider
- Shannon Zimmerman, River Falls Exonerees

Appearances Against

- Kevin St. John, Madison WI Department of Justice
- George Althoff, Portage Capital Newspapers, Portage Division
- Amy Bliss, Madison WI Housing Alliance
- Bill Lueders, Madison WI Freedom of Information Council
- John Metcalf, Madison WI Manufacturers & Commerce
- Bob Welch, Madison WI Broadcaster's Association
- Ellen Wagner, Milwaukee WI Land Title Association

- Richard Bishop, Oconomowoc Apartment Association of Southeast WI
- John Fischer, Wausau Self
- David Nowicki, Waukesha Self
- David Ohrmundt, Oconomowoc AASEW
- Julie Oleson, Camp Douglas Juneau Co. Housing Authority
 & WI Assn. of Housing Authorities
- Rich Sommer, Stevens Point Central WI Apartment Association
- Allyn Lepeska, Madison Self
- Doris Pelc, Elm Grove Self
- Brian Fleming, South Milwaukee Self
- Adam Frey, Verona Goldleaf Development, LLC
- Maureen Thomas, Madison Goldleaf Development

Appearances for Information Only

• None.

Registrations For

- Jeanne Rosten, Madison Self
- John Pray, Verona
- Dan Chitek, Monona
- Joyce Oehlhof, Portage

Registrations Against

- Eileen Bruskewitz, Waunakee
- Jill Filkouski, Sun Prairie Goldleaf Development
- Ioleta Snow, Rio Goldleaf Development
- Elizabeth Yszenga, McFarland Goldleaf Development
- Brenda Wood, Milwaukee City of Milwaukee
- Nancy Rottier, Madison Director of State Courts
- Bill Smith, Madison National Federation of Independent Business
- Gary Goyke, Madison WI Rental Housing Legislative Council
- Peter Christianson, Madison WI Newspaper Association
- Peter Christianson, Madison WI Land Title Association
- Mike Serpe, Sturgeon Bay Door County
- Bryan Brooks, Madison WI Builders Association
- Bryan Brooks, Madison Apartment Association of South Central WI

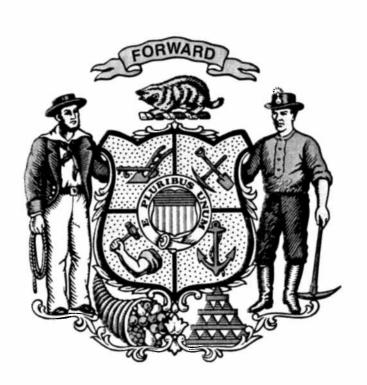
Registrations for Information Only

None.

Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1.

Nancy McAdams

Committee Clerk





MARATHON COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT BRANCH 3

500 FOREST STREET WAUSAU, WISCONSIN 54403 TELEPHONE (715) 261-1360 FAX (715) 261-1368

Lyssa Bassett, Reporter Tel. (715) 261-1366

VINCENT K. HOWARD JUDGE

Deb Kersten, Judicial Assistant Email: deborah.kersten@wicourts.gov

February 10, 2009

Representative Marlin Scheider Wisconsin State Representative The State Capital P.O. Box 8953 Madison, WI 53706 (RB 3010)

Re: CCAP Postings

Dear Representative Schneider;

The essence of what I was trying to convey to the applicant that day was that an individual court did not have the discretion to conceal that which is a public record and has been ever since Wisconsin became a U.S. territory and throughout its history as a state. What has changed is the fact that those records are now much more easily assessable.

I explained that any change would have to come from either the State Supreme Court that governs CCAP or from the legislature, that a single court cannot change that policy. Nothing has changed. Open public records remains public policy but both the courts and the legislature struggle with the issue of the ease in which those records are now available.

I have no easy solution to the issue. Our form of government depends upon openness in public proceedings and records. The court records that anyone can get today is exactly what anyone could get 160+ years ago. The only difference is that back then they had to go to the courthouse and perhaps spend a couple of hours going through the paper records. If they wanted a statewide search, they would have to go to all of the county courthouses. Today they can get the same information from their home or office in a matter of minutes.

The case that you referred to occurred on February 8, 2008. The defendant had been charged with two counts of false imprisonment, disorderly conduct and bail jumping. All of those charges, together with three counts of violating a domestic abuse/harassment injunction in another case, were dismissed for a plea to a disorderly conduct charge in that other case. Whether such a case should be kept off CCAP is up to the legislature.

So far, the only case that I have really had a problem with the availability of the CCAP records is a case where a young woman, about to get her college degree so she could counsel youth, took a job with the Wausau Boys & Girls Club as a volunteer. Two high school boys were interested in her. They claimed that they had gone to her house when the parents were not around and that she sexually assaulted them. She denied any interest in them or that they had ever been to her house. At the trial, it was clear that the boys had never been beyond sneaking a peak in the side window to the front door – mis-identifying a basement room that could be observed from there for the clothes washing/drying room that was actually located on another floor.

The jury found her not guilty. However, because of the boys' allegation, she has a record that means she cannot go into the vocation that she had wanted to. But even then, in the past the record still would have been available, not just so readily available.

Good luck as you wrestle with the difficult and thorny issue.

Sincerely,

Vincent K. Howard



JUL 1 4 2009

MARY C. DELANEY



TEL/FAX: (608) 222-7748 EMAIL:marycdelaney@yahoo.com

P.D. BOX 6702 MONONA, WI 53716-6702

July 13, 2009

Rep. Robert Turner, Chair Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 223 North PO Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. Anthony Staskunas Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 212 North PO Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. James Soletski Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 307 North PO Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. Joel Kleefisch Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 8 West PO Box 8952 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. Bill Kramer Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 18 West PO Box 8952 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. Keith Ripp Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 3 North PO Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708 Rep. Frederick Kessler, Vice-Chair Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 302 North PO Box 8952 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. Ann Hraychuck Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 6 North PO Box 8952 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. Sandy Pasch Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 122 North PO Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. Donald Friske Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 312 North PO Box 8952 Madison, WI 53708

Rep. Edward Brooks Committee on Criminal Justice State Capitol, Room 20 North PO Box 8952 Madison, WI 53708

Dear Criminal Justice Committee Members:

I am a Wisconsin resident, as well as, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School. As an attorney, I have been working with the Wisconsin Innocence Project to help Wisconsin exonerees connect to needed services, remove their fingerprint and arrest records and attempt to seal their court case and remove their case information from WCCAP. I understand that you are deliberating about whether to hold a public hearing on 2009 Assembly Bill 340. I am writing to request that you hold a public hearing in this bill.

Since 1989 nationwide more than 200 people have been exonerated.¹ These unfortunate people were wrongfully convicted of crimes they did not commit. Their convictions were overturned when evidence surfaced pointing to their innocence. Some of these individuals who reside in Wisconsin, I have come to know personally as an attorney. During my work with them, it became quicky apparent to me that the vast majority of them spent several years in prison. While imprisoned, most exonerees lost all their assets -- savings, vehicles, houses. Years of incarceration also stole from them an opportunity to save for retirement.² Once released, for those who were able to get jobs, only a minority earned more than their preconviction salaries. A majority of exonerees never recovered their pre-conviction earning potential.³ Nearly all of them "struggled to keep jobs, pay for health care, rebuild family ties and shed the psychological effects of years of questionable or wrongful imprisonment."⁴

For an exoneree in Wisconsin, the difficult task of finding employment is made harder by the publication of the charge or conviction on an internet site known as the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access Program. This site, maintained by the Wisconsin Circuit Court, can be reviewed by anyone with internet access. Its contents are sometimes inaccurate and often misunderstood. Potential employers rely upon WCCAP in order to ascertain whether an applicant has a criminal record.

¹"A Long Road Back After Exoneration, and Justice is Slow to Make Amends" NYT Nov 25, 2007.

²Surveys reveal that the wrongfully imprisoned who eventually regain their freedom suffer profound economic losses. Studies by the Life After Exoneration Project found that over 90 percent of Exonerees lost all their assets -- savings, vehicles, houses -- while imprisoned. Frontline: Burden of Innocence (PBS television broadcast, May 1, 2003).

³When corrected for inflation and unemployed Exonerees, the vast majority of Exonerees never recover their pre-conviction earning potential. <u>Frontline: Burden of Innocence</u> (PBS television broadcast, May 1, 2003).

⁴"A Long Road Back After Exoneration, and Justice is Slow to Make Amends." New York Times by Janet Roberts and Elizabeth Stanton. November 25, 2007.

WCCAP is a problem for all exonerees. It is a problem for those wrongfully prosecuted because the Wisconsin CCAP publishes the criminal case information regardless of the outcome of the case. So, the wrongfully accused person is forever associated with a heinous crime. It is a problem for those wrongfully convicted because most often the exoneree's adjudication of guilt was overturned on appeal. If an exoneree's conviction was overturned on appeal, WCCAP does not reflect that the conviction was voided. Erroneous information of the wrongful conviction remains on WCCAP as part of the public record the exoneree must continuously explain. As a result, the reputation as well as the livelihood of the exoneree is perpetually injured by the State's internet publication of this case information.

Currently, it is extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to secure the removal of criminal case information. At this point, the process requires that the exoneree file a motion with the court. This necessitates a motion hearing which taxes the already over-burdened court system. Moreover, the process of returning to court has the potential of exposing the exoneree to further trauma associated with his or her wrongful conviction.

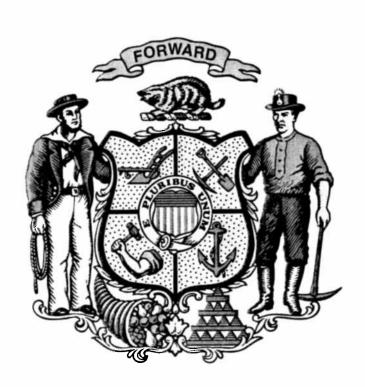
As I understand it, there is a limited fiscal burden connected to 09AB340. In fact, for cases previously dismissed or overturned, there would be a fiscal advantage in streamlining the process for removal of case information from WCCAP. It would relieve the burden on the court official who would otherwise be required to preside over or participate in motion hearings. It would also relieve the emotional burden on the exoneree of returning to court.

Most importantly, this proposed legislation is a step toward repairing the damage done to those citizens of Wisconsin wrongfully accused. This is the least that we can do for individuals that have already suffered enormously due to wrongful prosecutions and/or convictions. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Mary C. Delaney Attorney at Law

cc:

Attorney Cynthia Kieper, Office of Representative Marlin Schneider



COPY

McAdams, Nancy

From: Rep.Turner

Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2009 2:10 PM

To: Rep.Kessler; Rep.Staskunas; Rep.Hraychuck; Rep.Soletski; Rep.Pasch; Rep.Kleefisch;

Rep.Friske; Rep.Kramer; Rep.Brooks; Rep.Ripp

Cc: 'marycdelaney@yahoo.com'; Dyke, Don; Schmidt, Melissa

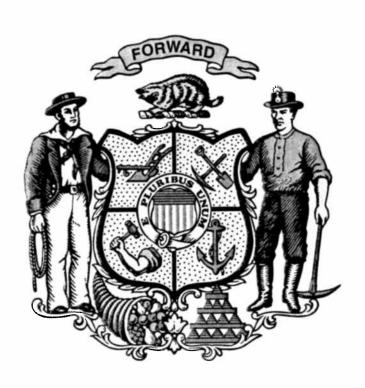
Subject: Letter From Mary C. Delaney

Dear Criminal Justice Committee Members:

In today's mail you may have received a letter from Mary Delaney of Monona, WI. Ms. Delaney references "Assembly Bill 240 in her letter." I just wanted you to know that she made a mistake, and the bill she is referring to is Assembly Bill 340, which has been referred to our committee. I tentatively plan to hold a committee meeting in mid-August and will be noticing the meeting in a week or so. If you have any other questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Rep. Bob Turner, Chair Assembly Criminal Justice Committee



McAdams, Nancy

From:

McAdams, Nancy Wednesday, July 22, 2009 11:59 AM Sent:

Rep.Turner To:

Dyke, Don; Schmidt, Melissa Cc: Public Hearing on AB 340 Subject:

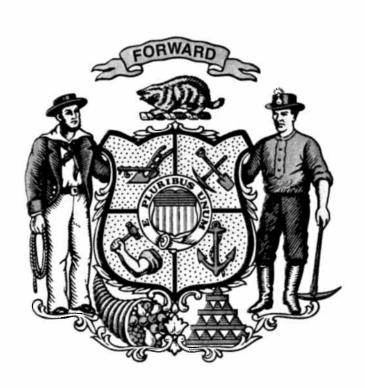
Bob,

I spoke to Cynthia in Marlin's office about when a good date would be for a hearing for AB 340. The date they selected is Thursday, October 1st.

N.

Nancy McAdams Office of State Rep. Robert Turner 223 North Capitol P.O. Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708-8953 Phone: 608-266-0731

Fax: 608-282-3661





September 10, 2009

Representative Marlin Schneider Room 204 North State Capitol P.O. Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Schneider:

I am writing to share my strong support for Assembly Bill 340, and to thank you for writing this bill. Although I support Wisconsin's liberal open records policy to an extent, it has gone too far. It is my belief that CCAP promotes discrimination against those who are innocent. It does this by displaying charges against all individuals, even if an individual was found not guilty or the charges were dismissed. This takes the power of determining guilt away from judges and juries and gives it to the police and the public. This subverts the fundamental theory of our justice system.

Although I have great respect for the work of law enforcement, they do make mistakes. This is understandable, given the difficult nature of police work. However, as it stands now, CCAP takes those wrongful arrests and makes the situations much worse. I believe, as common sense dictates, that if someone is found not guilty of a crime, they ought to be entitled to have their name completely cleared. In the vast majority of states, this happens. In our state, it does not.

In Wisconsin, if someone has charges dismissed, CCAP states that legally the individual is "presumed innocent." But this presumption of innocence certainly does not carry into the real world. Nosey neighbors, potential employers, and college admissions boards all have easy access to this information. There is simply no doubt that CCAP is regularly used to discriminate against innocent people. This is a completely unnecessary, unjust, and unsound policy.

What good is a trial if a finding of non-guilt still haunts you for the rest of your life? For many, the social stigma of being associated with criminal charges is worse than punishments handed down by judges. This is simply too much power to give to police and prosecutors.

In my case, my husband was wrongfully arrested after our mentally ill daughter went to the police and accused him of domestic violence. Since I was present on the day in question, I know that these accusations were completely fabricated. She was merely attempting (in vain) to win back custody of her daughter, which the courts had awarded to us due to her severe mental instability.

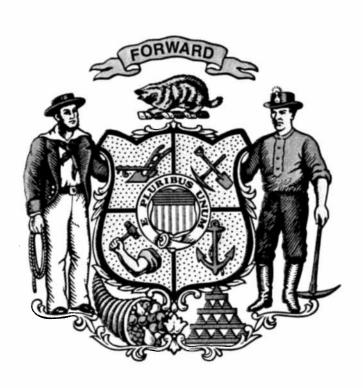
Nonetheless, as per Wisconsin's mandatory arrest laws, the police arrested my husband and charged him with domestic violence. This outrageous act by young, inexperienced, and uninformed police officers changed our lives. Fortunately, before the case went to trial, the prosecution discovered the absurdity of the charges and had them dismissed. Sadly, thanks to CCAP, much of the damage is irreversible. These charges, of which my husband was completely innocent, will haunt him for the rest of his life, unless you legislators help us.

What I ask for is nothing ridiculous. I wish to see Wisconsin tone down its open records laws to be more in line with the vast majority of other states in this country. Open government is good, of course. But as technology allows for greater access to information, we must remember to preserve our personal privacy, and uphold the integrity of the justice system.

Thank you, Representative Schneider, for introducing this much-needed legislation. Do not stop fighting for this bill. Feel free to use this letter in lieu of my testimony in support of AB 340. Please, however, do not use my name, as our family wishes to retain the last bit of privacy afforded to us.

Sincerely,





To:

Bob

From:

John Hermansen, Green Bay, WI Phone: 920-716-0322

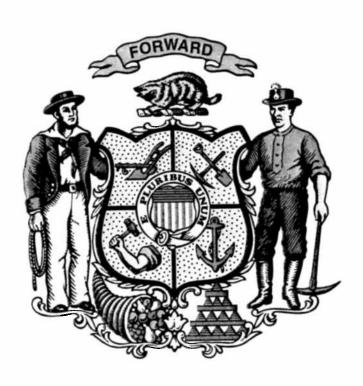
Date:

September 17, 2009

Re:

Assembly Bill 340, relating to access to and limiting information in CCAP

He wanted to thank you for scheduling this bill. He thinks it is a wonderful bill because it preserves the privacy of Wisconsin citizens. He does not believe CCAP should be eliminated, but it does need changes. He is worried that the power of the media will sidetrack this bill. Please feel free to call him if you want to speak with him more about it.





Wisconsin Association of Housing Authorities

September 21, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Wisconsin Association of Housing Authorities with regard to the proposed 2009 Assembly Bill 340, "An Act to create 758.20 of the statutes; relating to: restricting access to and limiting information contained in the Consolidated Court Automation Programs and providing a penalty."

As per federal guidelines, housing authorities are directed to research backgrounds of potential participants for housing assistance. In 24 CFR Part 982 - Section 8 Tenant Based Assistance: Housing Choice Voucher Subpart L-Family Obligations: Denial and Termination of Assistance, § 982.551 It states: Program. "Obligations of participants. (I) Crime by household members. The members of the household may not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises." Therefore, if Assembly Bill 340 passes, we will not have the ability to view pending cases involving drug-related criminal and violent criminal activity until a conviction is made. It states clearly that a participant engaged in the listed activities warrants termination of assistance under a program. The site gives us the background information we need to ensure that we are working with families whose members have not been engaged in those activities. We strive to work with deserving families who fall under the categories of extremely-low and low income. Most of these families do not engage in violent or drug related criminal activity. The same holds true for the housing authorities who administer public housing programs. One other category is evictions. If a participant was assisted in a federally subsidized housing assistance program and was evicted from that program, we need to obtain that information.

The proposed restrictions in Assembly Bill 340 will limit the access we now have to comply with federal regulations. If we cannot access this information, we may not be able to maintain our population in the manner required by law. Please assist us by not supporting the proposed Assembly Bill 340 so that we, as housing authorities, may continue to monitor the presence of violent or drug related criminal activity in relation to our program. Should you have any questions regarding the above information, please feel free to call us at the number listed below. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely, WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Donna Cook, President and the undersigned members

(262) 653-4120

Name

Agency/Housing Authority Represented

Agency/Housing Authority Represented



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Wisconsin Association of Housing Authorities
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Wisconsin Association of Housing Authorities
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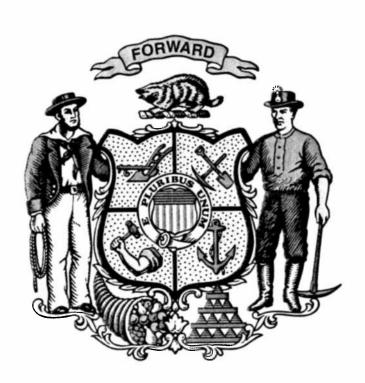
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HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF MONROE

WESTWOOD MANOR • 1108 W. WISCONSIN STREET #103 • SPARTA, WI 54656

TELEPHONE (608) 269-5017

TOLL FREE 1-800-491-5017

FAX (608) 269-5102

September 29, 2009

Criminal Justice Committee Wisconsin State Legislature RE: 2009 Assembly Bill 340

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the 5th District of the Wisconsin Association of Housing Authorities (WAHA) this letter urges your support to allow Public Housing Authorities access to the Consolidated Court Automation Programs electronic system without charge or review by the state director of courts. Those listed below also ask that the search continue to include information related to the charges of individuals who are party, not just necessarily conviction, liable, evicted or involved in a restraining order or injunction.

Housing Authorities use this site daily to check backgrounds on applicants for housing programs. Regulations of the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Agency and US Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Agriculture-Rural Development require that rental assistance cannot be given to individuals with certain criminal charges or backgrounds. They include drug, physical violence and sexual predators. Federal regulations say housing authorities MAY deny assistance to an applicant or participant without conviction, but with a charge or overwhelming evidence of involvement with those types of violations. Housing authorities currently are required to notify denied applications of the reasons for the denial and how the information was acquired. This proposed requirement of AB 340 is already part of our routine. Denied applicants also have the right to appeal any denials.

It is the wishes of those listed below to continue access in the same manner as Law enforcement officers and other employees of state, federal and municipal law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin who require access to court documents and records in the course of their employment. Access allows us to follow regulations and restrict the use of taxpayer's funds to serve those with violent and drug related backgrounds and to maintain a safe, drug-free environment for our tenants. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Theresa Burns-Gilbert, Vice-President District 5 WAHA Monroe County Housing Authority Executive Director on behalf of the Housing Professionals listed below following the most recent meeting on September 23, 2009.

Viroqua Housing Authority (HA) Wendy Winterfield

Viroqua HA Dawn Nemec

Patrick Dienger LaCrosse County HA

Westby HA Heath Gilkes Mauston HA Dana Anderson Mauston HA Pam Horst

Prairie du Chien HA Joan Howe

Boscobel HA Nancy Roth

LaCrosse City HA Don Anthony LaCrosse City HA Jane Alberts LaCrosse City HA Ryan Johnson Richland Center HA Janine Parduhn Juneau County HA Julie Oleson Crawford County HA Barb Boland

Rachel Muehlenkamp Tomah City HA

Theresa Burns-Gilbert Monroe County HA